

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE IKE SKELTON  
ON THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
BUDGET  
FOR THE 107<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Hoyer and members of the committee. I join with Chairman Stump in supporting the budget request of the Committee on Armed Services for the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress.

As you know, the Armed Services Committee operates a little differently from most committees in the House in that it still has essentially a nonpartisan staff. Generally, and with a few exceptions, the professional and clerical staff support all the members of the committee. Mr. Stump and I continue to follow a long-standing procedure which allows each of us to maintain sufficient professional staff to serve the members on each side. As you know, the majority of issues arising on our committee are not truly partisan in nature, and this arrangement has worked well for many years.

I want to echo Chairman Stump's comments that the staff I control is treated fairly with respect to pay, COLAs, equipment, supplies, travel funding and office space. I have no complaints. I want to thank Chairman Stump for supporting my request for another minority staff person and for aggressively pursuing modifications to the committee hearing rooms in order to

accommodate one of our new members, Congressman Jim Langevin from Rhode Island. I truly appreciate Chairman Stump's support in these areas.

In urging you to fully fund the Armed Services Committee's budget request, I would point out that our committee has oversight responsibility for a national defense structure that is funded at well over \$300 billion annually, a figure that represents over 15% of the total federal budget and about one-half of the federal government's discretionary budget. We are also one of the few authorizing committees that manage to pass a large and complex bill that becomes law every year. That we do so with such a small staff is remarkable. But Mr. Chairman, we will not be able to continue to do our work if we don't have adequate resources. I regard the committee's request for the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress as extraordinarily modest, particularly given what other committees have requested. Accordingly, I hope that the House Administration Committee will be able to support full funding of our committee's request.

Mr. Chairman, Bob Stump and I have already developed an extremely cordial working relationship, and the committee's budget request for the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress is an outgrowth of that relationship. I fully support the request, and I thank you for your committee's consideration.